

BEFORE THE SOUTH CAROLINA STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION

In the Matter of the Revocation)	
)	ORDER OF
or Suspension of the Educators)	
)	REVOCATION
Certificate of Ginger G. Lewis)	
)	
Certificate # 169629)	

SUMMARY OF THE CASE

The South Carolina State Board of Education (State Board) considered this matter on May 13, 2003. On April 2, 2003, the State Department of Education (Department) sent a notice of the possible suspension or revocation of her South Carolina educators certificate (certificate) to Ms. Lewis by certified mail, return receipt requested, delivery restricted to addressee. Ms. Lewis received the notice, as evidenced by a signed postal receipt. Ms. Lewis did not request a hearing during the time period allowed by law, and is in default. After considering the evidence presented, the State Board voted to revoke Ms. Lewis's certificate.

FINDINGS OF FACT

Ms. Lewis holds a valid South Carolina certificate, and has over seven years of teaching experience. She was under contract with Pickens County School District (District) for the 2002-2003 school year. Ms. Lewis was placed on administrative leave from Pickens Middle School (school) on January 31, 2003, following an investigation into allegations concerning her handling of two school fundraisers, while serving as student council advisor. On February 7, 2003, Ms. Lewis resigned, after being charged by the Pickens Police Department with Breach of Trust. Ms. Lewis admitted to law enforcement that she had taken a total of \$1139.00 from the two fundraisers and used the money for her personal bills. She stated that she was having personal financial problems and the temptation was too great to use these funds for her personal expenses. One allegation involved an unpaid invoice for \$633.75, dated January 24, 2002, from Maredy Candy Company. After numerous attempts to obtain payment from Ms. Lewis, the

company contacted the school principal. Ms. Lewis initially stated that the bank lost the check. She also stated that the fundraiser made a profit, but she used the additional funds to pay the disc jockey for a student dance. Also in January 2003, the Pickens County Board of Disabilities and Special Needs (PCBDSN) called the principal about another fundraiser. In October 2002, the student counsel sold Belk's Day coupons for the Board, and Ms. Lewis wrote the Board a personal check for \$585.00. The check was returned because Ms. Lewis wrote it on a closed personal account. When she was confronted about this matter by the principal, Ms. Lewis asked the PTO advisor to write the Board a check from that account. Ms. Lewis never deposited any money from this fundraiser into the PTO account.

CONCLUSIONS OF LAW

The South Carolina Board of Education may, for just cause, either suspend or revoke the certificate of any person." S.C. Code Ann. § 59-25-150 (1990). Just cause includes: "Unprofessional conduct, Dishonesty, Any conduct involving moral turpitude, and Evident unfitness for position for which employed." S.C. Code Ann. § 59-25-160 (1990). The State Board finds that the preponderance of the evidence presented, which is undisputed by Ms. Lewis, supports its decision to revoke Ms. Lewis's teaching certificate # 169629.

South Carolina State Board of Education

By: /S/ Greg Killian

Greg Killian, Chair

Columbia, South Carolina

May 13, 2003